



A Climate Resilient Open Space and Recreation Plan for Rowe

---

# A Climate Resilient Open Space and Recreation Plan for Rowe

Created by the Rowe Open Space and Recreation Committee and  
the FRCOG

**Funded by the MA District Local Technical Assistance & Municipal Vulnerability  
Preparedness Programs**

**October 2, 2023**

---

This website is where you can learn about the *Climate Resilient Open Space and Recreation Plan* currently under development and about the ways in which natural resource stewardship enhances climate resilience.

Check back with us to learn what information is going into the plan and how to engage in the planning process.

To use this tool, keep scrolling through. Maps and images will load best when scrolling slowly.



# OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PUBLIC FORUM



**The Rowe Open Space and Recreation Committee invites  
you to a presentation and discussion of the  
DRAFT 2024 ROWE CLIMATE-RESILIENT  
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN**

**Wednesday, November 1st  
6:00 – 7:30 p.m.**

**Town Hall or via Zoom (hybrid)**

**Followed at 7:30 by a Public Meeting for Rowe's Proposed  
Climate-Smart Forestry Demonstration Project**

Zoom link: <https://bit.ly/RoweNov1> Visit the Town website for full Zoom info

For more information on the plan and it's development:  
[tinyurl.com/ClimateResilientRoweOSRP](https://tinyurl.com/ClimateResilientRoweOSRP)

Questions or public comment: [tflanders@frcog.org](mailto:tflanders@frcog.org)

The Town of Rowe's Open Space and Recreation Committee has completed a draft of the Climate-Resilient Open Space and Recreation Plan for Rowe and needs your input to ensure that the plan has captured the community's vision and needs. We have worked with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to create Rowe's first Open Space and Recreation Plan—a tool through which Rowe plans for the future of its conservation and recreation resources and becomes eligible for certain Massachusetts conservation and recreation grants.

Your input is an essential part of the Town's ongoing work to identify, prioritize, and develop projects that 1) meet the recreation needs of its residents, 2) protect our natural, scenic, historic, and recreation resources, 3) plan future land use, and 4) help make our community more resilient to a changing climate. Once approved by the state, the plan also makes the community eligible for MA Department of Conservation Services grant funds for conservation and recreation projects for up to seven years.

The public opinion survey period will end on December 1<sup>st</sup>. The high public opinion period will end on November 1<sup>st</sup>. The low public opinion period will end on October 1<sup>st</sup>. The high public opinion period will end on September 1<sup>st</sup>. The low public opinion period will end on August 1<sup>st</sup>. The high public opinion period will end on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The low public opinion period will end on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The high public opinion period will end on May 1<sup>st</sup>. The low public opinion period will end on April 1<sup>st</sup>. The high public opinion period will end on March 1<sup>st</sup>. The low public opinion period will end on February 1<sup>st</sup>. The high public opinion period will end on January 1<sup>st</sup>. The low public opinion period will end on December 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Zoom info:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87275455775?pwd=MDFndlVkcFc4T1ZEZWVvLy9XTklCQT09>

## Dial by your location

+1 305 224 1968 US

Meeting ID: 872 7545 5775

Passcode: 965267



## What do Rowe residents think about open space, recreation, climate, and the environment?

## Rowe Open Space and Recreation Surveys

[Click here to see results](#)

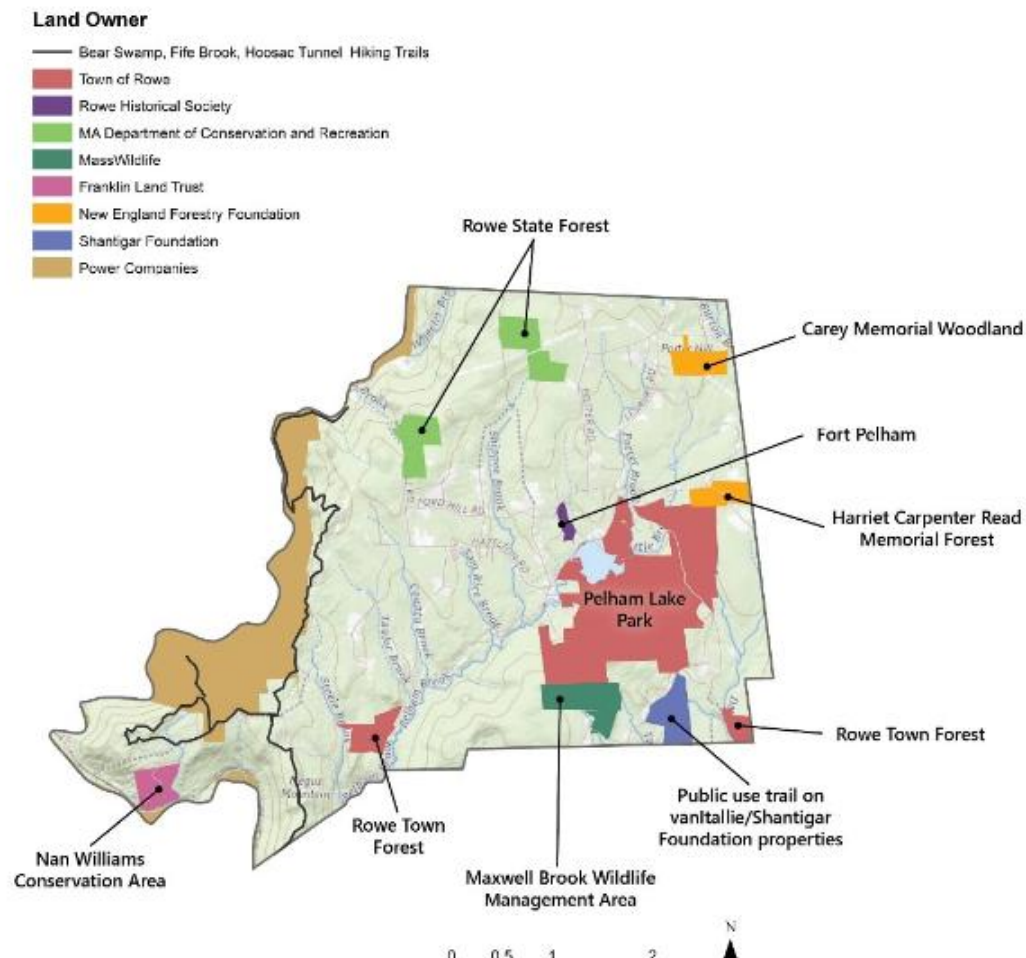
[https://www.rowe-ma.gov/files/Rowe\\_OSRP\\_survey\\_results.pdf](https://www.rowe-ma.gov/files/Rowe_OSRP_survey_results.pdf)



**Images of Rowe through the seasons.** All photos are used with permission. Attribution can be found by clicking the "i" icon in the upper left corner of each image.







## A Climate Resilient OSRP

### What is an Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP)?

An OSRP is a written document that provides a long-term vision and action plan for a town's conservation and recreation resources. It provides a comprehensive inventory of natural, scenic, cultural, agricultural, and recreational resources with accompanying maps and an analysis of the community's open space and recreation needs.

### Purpose of planning for open space and recreation

The seven-year action plan contains specific recommendations that, if implemented by Town boards, committees, and residents, will help to protect and enhance the community's natural areas and recreation opportunities. Having an OSRP that has been approved by the

Department of Conservation Services (DCS) makes the Town eligible for multiple DCS grants for seven years.

## **Why a climate-resilient OSRP?**

Climate change is anticipated to have an immense impact on the natural and man-made world. By particularly focusing on climate resiliency in this plan, Rowe is strategically taking proactive measures to ensure the function of natural resources, preservation of biodiversity, and longevity of the community's health and safety.

## **Resources**

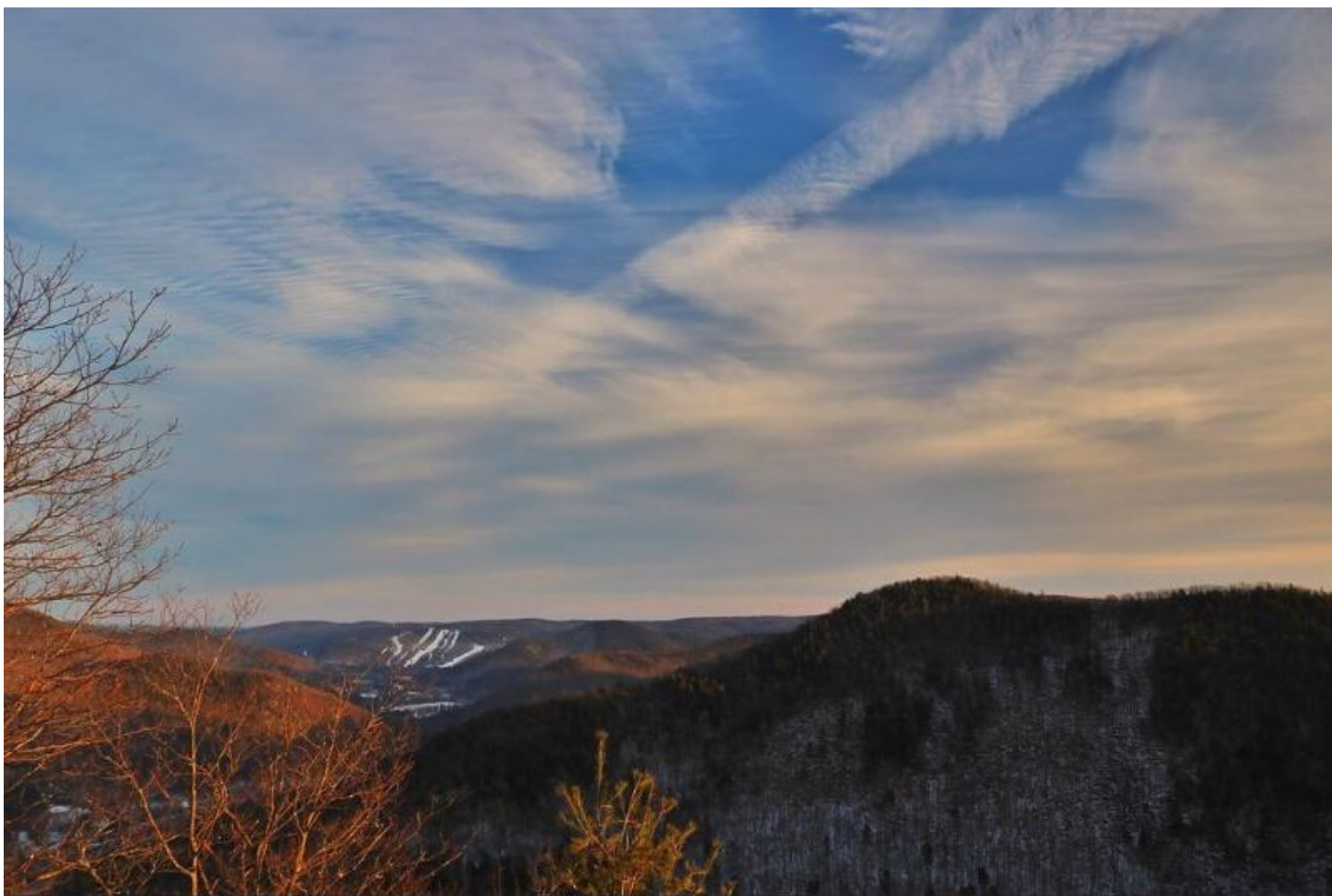
**MA Open Space Network**

**Open Space Handbook**

**OSRP Planner's Workbook**

**Resilient MA**

*Map: Publicly accessible open space in Rowe.*



## What do we mean by *open space*?

**Open space** is generally defined as undeveloped land or land lightly developed for recreational purposes. It may be publicly or privately owned, and may or may not be publicly accessible. In Rowe, open space includes large tracts of forested land, fields and meadows, streams and rivers, wetlands, lakes and ponds, agricultural fields and barns, significant historical structures and landscapes, and recreational facilities.

Protecting open space means protecting actively managed farm and forestland, wildlife habitat and refuge, rare ecosystems, groundwater supply, areas that help with flood control, recreational lands, scenic beauty, cultural artifacts, and "sense of place."

Use the arrow button at the right side of the image to explore the OSRP's other core topics **RECREATION**, **NATURAL RESOURCES**, and



## CULTURAL RESOURCES.

*Image: Sunset view of Berkshire East ski mountain from Negus Mountain.*



### What do we mean by *recreation*?

**Recreation** refers to the opportunities to play, relax, exercise, or play sports for enjoyment.

Recreation activities rely on recreation areas or facilities that range in how intensively developed they may be. Public recreation facilities in Rowe include a town park, picnic areas, playgrounds, trails, courts, ball field, the town beach, the equestrian ring, and the skate park.

*Image: Bog bridge on a Pelham Lake Park trail.*





## What do we mean by *natural resources*?

We define **natural resources** as the natural features of the landscape that form or contribute to ecosystems. In protecting natural resources, we are both protecting the **ecosystem services** provided by healthy ecosystems and recognizing the **intrinsic value** of nature.

Ecosystem services are benefits to humans provided by ecological systems, such as drinking water filtration, flood storage capacity, species diversity, carbon sequestration, and soil nutrient processes.

Intrinsic value is the idea that nature has value in its own right, independent of how it serves human needs.

*Image: Three adjacent ecosystems in Rowe--foreground: wetland, midground: successional forest, and background: mature forest.*





## What do we mean by *cultural resources*?

Rowe's landscape, rural history, and scenic beauty lend the town a particular character and sense of place. Historic features like cellar holes, stone walls, fences, dams, abandoned mines, fields, dirt roads, scenic vistas, agricultural operations, archeological sites, religious or ceremonial sites, and historic buildings are all **cultural resources** that represent the unique intersection of the cultural and natural world in Rowe.

*Image: Mill Pond Dam*

## Increasing Climate Resilience



## 1 Forests



When we manage forests like Pelham Lake Park for **climate resilience** and to endure additional non-climate stressors, we are preserving the ability of forests to act as a carbon sink, protect water quality and supply, provide refuge for plants and animals, and provide cooler places for people during hot weather.

Climate resilience is the ability to prepare for, recover from, and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

### **Value of Forests**

### **Forests as Carbon Sinks**

### **Healthy Forests for Water**

*Image: A trail through a forested section of Pelham Lake Park.*

**2**

## **Floodplains and River Corridors**





The protection of **floodplains** and **river corridors** from development along rivers like the Deerfield River and other smaller waterways preserves the health of the river and prevents costly damage from floods.

A floodplain is the area of land next to a river or stream that is subject to inundation flooding. They provide temporary storage space for floodwaters and sediment produced by the watershed.

A river corridor is the active river channel and the adjacent area where the river is expected to move over time through erosion and sedimentation processes.

### **Healthy, Climate-Resilient Rivers**

*Image: The Deerfield River at Zoar Gap, where a road runs close to the river.*



## 3

## Wildlife Habitat



A variety of plant, animal, and insect species are vulnerable to climate change impacts such as rising temperatures, heavy rain and drought, seasons changing, and shifting habitat. To protect **biodiversity**, we must protect the habitat. Native brown trout (pictured), which have been documented as reproducing in the wild below the Fife Brook Dam in the Deerfield River, require cold water temperatures and adequate stream depth to complete their life cycle.

Biodiversity is the variety in the species of animals, plants, insects, fungi, and microorganisms that inhabit a given area or ecosystem.

### Importance of Biodiversity

## Deerfield River Brown Trout Study

*Image: Brown trout, a native species that has been found to be reproducing in the Deerfield River.*

4

## Adams Mountain and Todd Mountain



By connecting important habitat, **wildlife corridors** allow animals to migrate to new habitat or access a broad range of resources. Wildlife corridors include contiguous open space, safe passage across a road, or a river or stream that flows without barriers like dams or elevated culverts. In Rowe, an example of a wildlife corridor is the connected, mostly protected forest on Adams and Todd Mountains and the ridge that runs southwest of these mountains toward the Deerfield River.

## Habitat and Transportation

### Connecting Lands for Resilience

*Image: Todd Mountain from Rowe center.*



## Pollinator Habitat





It is estimated that one out of every three bites of food we eat exists because of **pollinators** like bees, butterflies, moths, birds, bats, beetles, and other insects. Throughout Rowe, protecting and enhancing pollinator habitat helps to sustain biodiversity, ecosystem function, and agriculture systems as we adapt to climate change.

### **Importance of Pollinators**

### **Pollinator-Friendly Practices**

### **Pollinators and Co-benefits**

*Image: A Hemaris aethra, a.k.a Dievrilla clear-winged hummingbird moth, photographed on Negus Mountain. This is one of very few observations of this species in Massachusetts.*

6

## **Agricultural land**







Our agricultural land and other **food system** infrastructure is important for supporting a healthy local and regional food system that is resilient in the face of future climate and economic shifts.

The food system is the complex web of food production, processing, transportation, and consumption that contribute to food security and good nutrition in a given area.

### Protecting Agricultural Land

*Image: Pastured cows in north Rowe.*

7

## Wetlands



A **wetland** is a place in which the land is covered by water, either seasonally or permanently. Wetlands such as this one on Ford Hill Road function as their own distinct



ecosystem and are valuable for flood protection, improving water quality, slowing high velocity currents in streams, recharging groundwater, capturing carbon, and for the habitat they provide. As we experience more intense precipitation events followed by drought periods, wetlands help us by acting as sponges, storing water and slowly releasing it, thus reducing flood intensity and allowing for groundwater recharge.

### **Value of Wetlands**

*Image: Wetland seen from Ford Hill Road.*



## **Rowe's Accomplishments**

### **Previous Open Space and Recreation**

### **Accomplishments Specific to Pelham Lake Park**

**2014:** Survey of Pelham Lake completed by Solitude Lake Management that assessed the health of the lake and monitored for invasive species.

**2020:** Forest assessment and *Pelham Lake Park Forest Stewardship Plan* created, including goals to enhance resilience and promote greater biodiversity within park borders and beyond. ***Find more details and a link to this document later in this section.***

**2021:** With funding from the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership, installation of 13 kiosks at major trailheads. Kiosks were built to display maps, and educational and informational materials.

**2022:** With Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership funding, design of an Old Growth interpretive trail to educate the public about the characteristics of old growth forests, their importance in sequestering carbon, and the importance of preserving them.

**2022:** With Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership funding, implemented climate resilience projects, including an eastern hemlock study plot that annually assesses hemlock wooly adelgid damage in order to determine a course of action, inoculation of ash trees against the emerald ash borer, red oak enrichment plantings, and white oak assisted-migration plantings.

**2022:** With regional MVP funding, updated the *Forest Stewardship Plan* to include additional climate change mitigation measures and goals for the park's sustainability.

**2022:** With Town funding, assessed the park's trail system, trail maps, and trail maintenance plan.

**2022:** Secured Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership funding for educational and information materials for the kiosks, purchase of trail blazes for the trails system, and construction materials for additional sections of boardwalk to be installed in 2023.

**Ongoing:** Recreational and education programs in the park, such as

educational walks and talks covering topic like forestry, birds, wildlife tracking, and mushrooms. Twice-a-summer senior picnics.

*Image: Wayfinding signs for Pelham Lake Park trails.*



## **Previous Open Space and Recreation Accomplishments throughout Rowe**

**2010:** Adopted a right-to-farm bylaw.

**2011:** Green Community designation, resulting in funding for installation of municipal solar PV arrays, municipal weatherization and sealing measures, municipal heating system conversion to wood pellet and air-source heat pumps, educational workshops, and a residential energy incentive program.

**2015:** Assessment of the health of the white pines at the Percy Brown



Picnic Area.

**2018:** Nan Williams Conservation Area transferred to Franklin Land Trust and opened to the public.

**2020:** Funding secured to replace a culvert on Ford Hill Road with a bridge, which will improve aquatic and terrestrial stream passage.

**2021:** Five families and the Shantigar community, together with the Franklin Land Trust, MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, MA Department of Fish and Game, New England Forestry Foundation, and other generous foundations and donors, conserved over 800 acres of land with publicly accessible trails centered around Warner Hill in Rowe and Charlemont.

**2021:** Rowe *Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan* completed. ***Find more details with a link to this document later in this section.***

**2021:** 15 diseased trees removed from the Percy Brown Picnic Area, to be replaced with more resilient species of hardwoods and conifers.

**2022:** In collaboration with the FRCOG and other Deerfield River stakeholders, developed the *Deerfield River Study*, which identifies challenges and opportunities for managing public use of the Deerfield River.

**Ongoing:** Assessment and maintenance of municipal dams, bridges, and roads to be more climate resilient.

*Image: View north from Negus Mountain to Bear Swamp Pump Station*

## **Rowe Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Resiliency Plan**

The Town of Rowe was awarded a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) planning grant in 2019 by the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and completed its first MVP Plan in

2021.

The MVP Plan assesses the strengths and vulnerabilities of the Rowe's **infrastructure, society, and natural resources** to so that Rowe may better address its vulnerabilities and build on its strengths.

Rowe is now eligible to apply for MVP Action Grants that address climate change impacts resulting from extreme weather, flooding, severe heat, and other climate impacts.

### Rowe MVP Resiliency Plan

Click here to read Rowe's MVP Plan.

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/rowe-report/download>

### Rowe MVP Planning Process

Click here to learn about Rowe's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness planning efforts in 2020 and 2021.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/95946598b5c84848ecf9e0bcbf20e42>



## Pelham Lake Park Forest Stewardship Plan

This Pelham Lake Park Forest Stewardship Plan is the result of a 5 month, community-centered planning, outreach, education, and consensus-building process. The plan synthesizes and condenses the community's ideas, visions, and goals for the forest in Pelham Lake Park into an actionable set of 15 stewardship recommendations. These recommendations largely center around four key management areas:

1. Trails and Recreation
2. Forest Protection



3. Active Management

4. Forest Carbon

### **Responses to climate-related questions in the Pelham Lake Park Forest Stewardship Survey**

- Over 50% of survey respondents were Very Concerned about the effects of climate change on forests. Another nearly 20% of residents are Concerned.
- Over 70% of survey respondents either noticed the effects of climate change in their community or were unsure. Here's what some residents noticed:

*"Winters are not as cold as they were forty years ago, and spring is coming somewhat earlier than before."*

*"Heavier rainfalls and more often. Temperature rise. Invasive species. More ticks than 20 years ago."*

*"More severe weather, changing of the seasons with frosts & later winters, severe storms & flooding with more bugs which were not here in yesteryear."*

- Over 70% of respondents support sustainable forestry practices that increase the forest's ability to mitigate climate change effects locally. Others said their support depends on the practices:

*"Yes, if managed well, with good contractors, and the practices are revisited regularly."*

## Pelham Lake Park Forest Stewardship Cl...

Click here to open the 2022 - 2032 Forest Stewardship

Climate Plan for Rowe's Pelham Lake Park

[https://rowe-ma.gov/files/Rowe\\_Pelham\\_Lake\\_Park\\_FSCP\\_2022-2032\\_FINALv2\\_8-4-22.pdf](https://rowe-ma.gov/files/Rowe_Pelham_Lake_Park_FSCP_2022-2032_FINALv2_8-4-22.pdf)



## OSRP Outline and Summaries of Chapters



## **Section 1: Plan Summary**

A brief summary of the overall aspirations of the community and recommendations for reaching those goals.

## **Section 2: Introduction**

A brief summary of the plan's purpose and the planning process.

- a. Statement of Purpose
- b. Planning Process and Public Participation

## **Section 3: Community Setting**

A broad picture of the community, examining it in a variety of contexts that illustrate how its character evolved and how it may need to change to address the community's needs in the future.

- a. Regional Context
- b. History of the Community
- c. Population Characteristics
- d. Growth and Development Patterns

## **Section 4: Environmental Inventory and Analysis**

An inventory of the community's natural and cultural resources, accompanied by analysis that starts to indicate what goals and objectives will help protect the biodiversity, ecosystems, and ecological integrity of the community.

- a. Climate Change
- b. Geology, Soils and Topography
- c. Landscape Character
- d. Water Resources
- e. Vegetation
- f. Fisheries and Wildlife
- g. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments
- h. Environmental Challenges

## **Section 5: Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest**

Inventory of ownership, management, current use, condition, recreation potential, public access, type of public grants accepted, zoning, and degree of protection, for every open space parcel in town.

- a. Private Parcels
- b. Non-profit Parcels
- c. Public Parcels



## **Section 6: Community Goals and Vision**

Description of the process for coming up with the community's overall goals and a broad statement of that vision.

- a. Description of the Process
- b. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

## **Section 7: Analysis of Needs**

A systematic examination of what is needed to achieve the community's stated goals.

- a. Summary of Resource Protection Needs
- b. Summary of Community's Needs
- c. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use

## **Section 8: Goals and Objectives**

A synthesis of the statement of vision and general goals from Section 6 and the data analyses from Section 7, presented as a comprehensive set of goals and objectives.

## **Section 9: Seven-Year Action Plan**

A description of previous accomplishments and a year-by-year timetable for specific actions to accomplish the objectives identified in Section 8.

## Section 10: Public Comments

## Section 11: References



## Summary of Draft Chapters

### Section 3: COMMUNITY SETTING

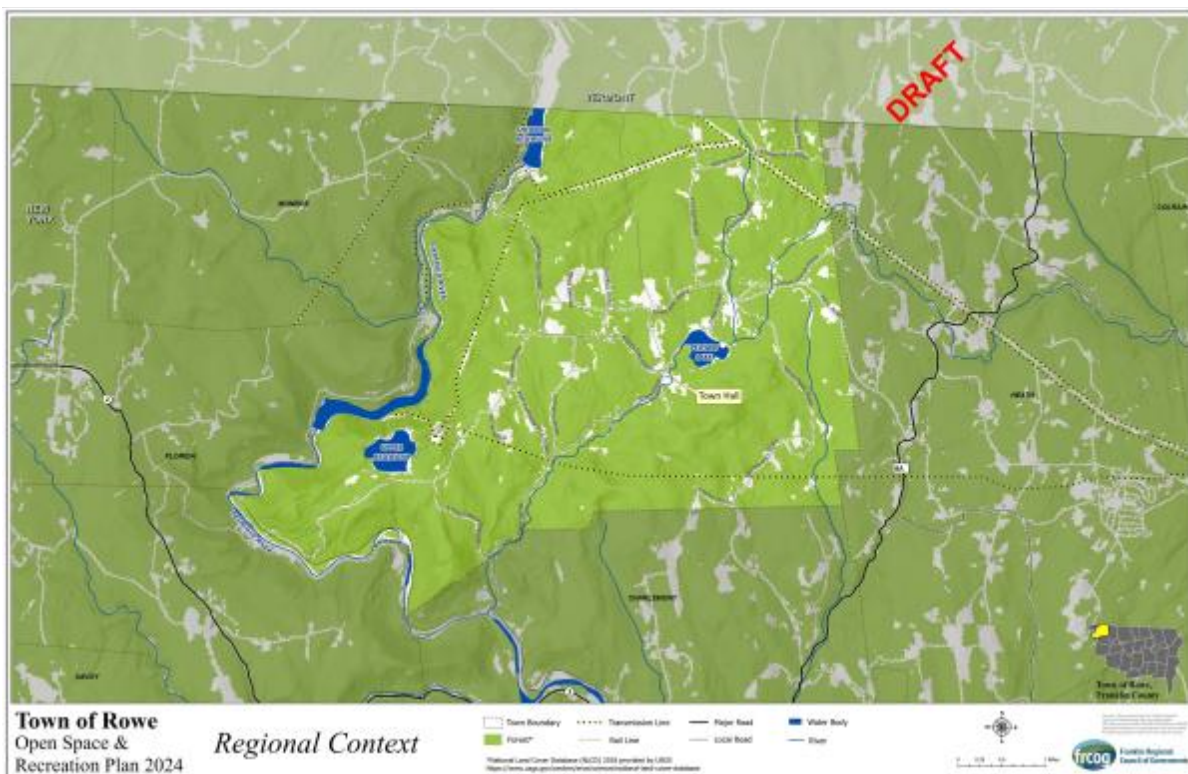
As it plans the protection of open space, natural systems, and recreation opportunities, Rowe can consider the role that its rich resources play across the region. Rowe is part of a forest corridor stretching along the Appalachian Mountain chain from west-central Connecticut through Vermont's Green Mountains to the Canadian border. Rowe is also situated in the middle section of the Deerfield River Watershed, the upper part of which reaches far into Vermont. As one of the last areas in the state with large contiguous forested blocks and with significant biodiversity, Rowe and neighboring towns have long been the focus of regional land protection projects.

Recreation opportunities found in and around Rowe, such as the Pelham Lake Park and Bear Swamp trail system, and the fishing and whitewater rafting on the Deerfield River, draw people from around and outside the region. Despite having very few businesses to diversify the tax base, tax revenue from the utility companies that own land and operate facilities in Rowe has supported the Town's ability to attend to the recreational and open space goals of its residents.

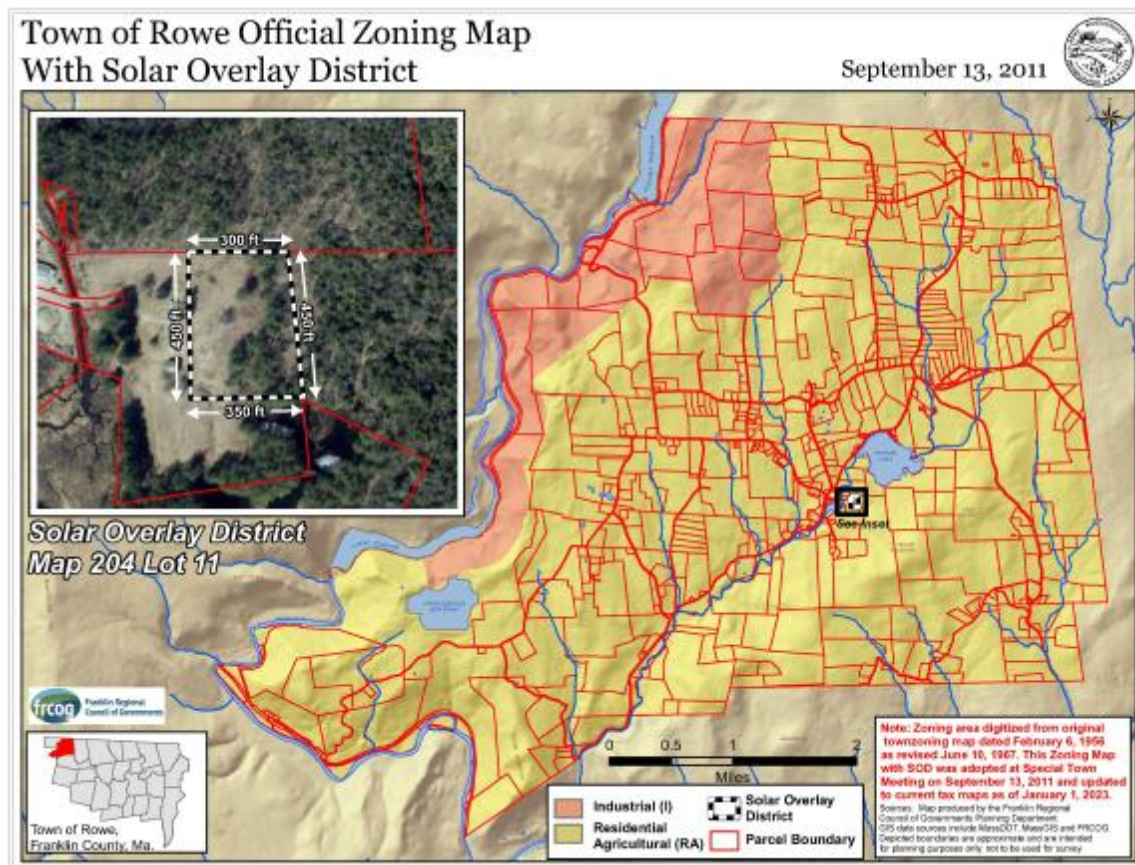
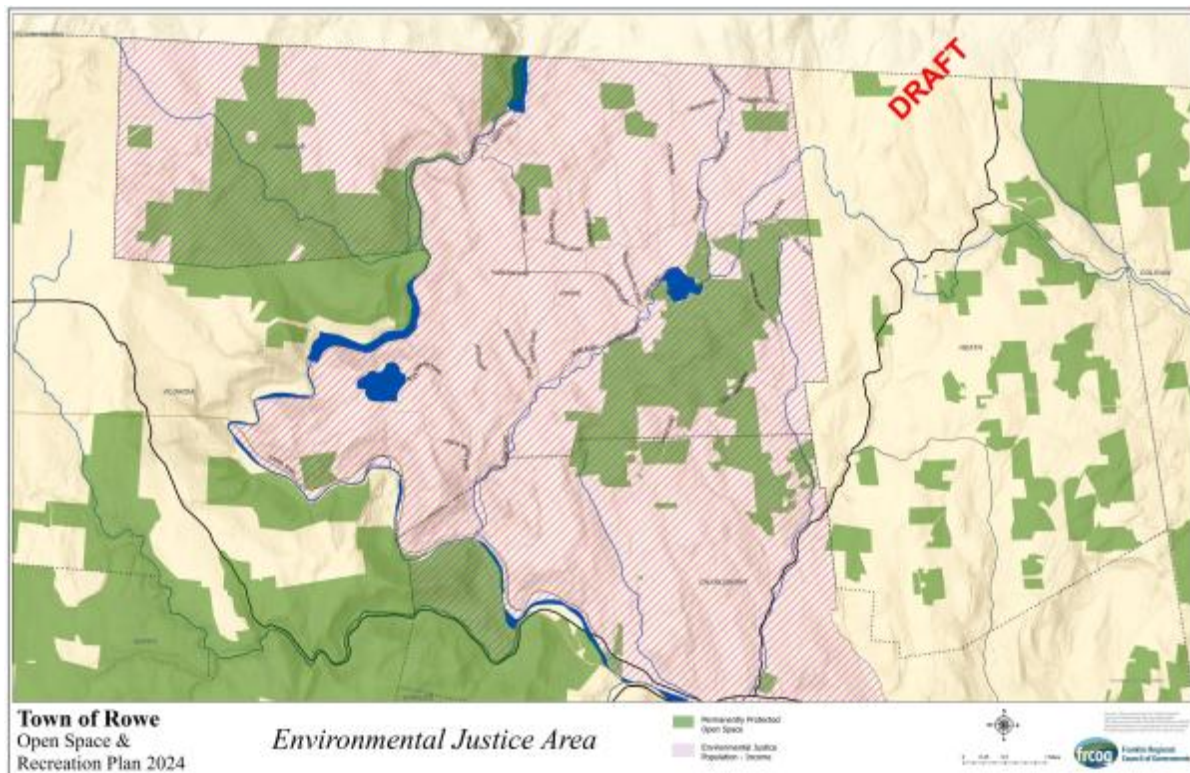
Rowe occupies an area encompassing or near to the traditional homelands of the Mohican, Abenaki, Pocumtuck, and Nipmuc peoples, all members of the Wabanaki (Dawnland Confederacy). European settlement first began in Rowe in 1744 and over the years has been defined by periods of colonial-era military occupation, agricultural

subsistence living, logging, sheep farming, railroad construction, mining, and hydroelectric and nuclear power generation.

Rowe is a predominantly white community with median household income around the county average. Residents are more evenly age-distributed than in many rural communities in Franklin County, but like all of the county, the proportion of older residents will grow. Rowe's population has fluctuated in the last century, but appears to be in a period of incremental growth since the 1950s. There is no sign that internal factors, such as changes in the economic sector or a decline in working-age residents who could start families, will drive population change in Rowe. However, the population and overall character of Rowe could be affected by external factors such as climate-driven migration or the recently established access to broadband. There are a number of zoning changes Rowe could consider adopting in order to safeguard against the development of valued open space and to promote greater environmental protection where development is desired. With thoughtful planning ahead, any development that does come could be integrated in a way that sustains Rowe's existing rural character.







## Section 4: ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND

## ANALYSIS

Changes in Rowe's climate are likely to lead to certain detrimental environmental and social impacts, such as:

- More severe droughts
- More flooding and erosion that threatens roads and buildings
- Higher risk of infectious diseases
- Greater chance of wildfires
- Disruption to local industries such as agriculture, forestry, and tourism
- More rapid spread of invasive species

Remoteness, steep topography and soils have historically limited commercial development and intensive residential in Rowe. Water quantity and quality has not appeared to be a development constraint historically, but not much research has been conducted on the characteristics of Rowe's groundwater resources.

Both streams within Rowe and the Deerfield River along its border have had good water quality and nonpoint source pollution is not a significant issue in town. The hydroelectric facilities on the Deerfield River, however, do negatively impact aquatic habitat in the Deerfield. Pelham Lake and the Sherman Reservoir are both catch and release only due to mercury contamination.

Rowe is dominated by forests that are relatively intact and free of invasive plants, pathogens, and insect pests, but invasive plants, pests and pathogens are becoming more present. Rowe's woodlands are also less resilient for being generally the same age.

Rowe is an important place to conserve biodiversity and protect wildlife corridors because of the health and intactness of the forests, the presence of undeveloped coldwater rivers and streams, and the existence of some unusual plant communities. Protecting whole, connected ecosystems in Rowe will help preserve not only rare and threatened species, but species that are abundant now that may be

stressed in the future due to climate change.

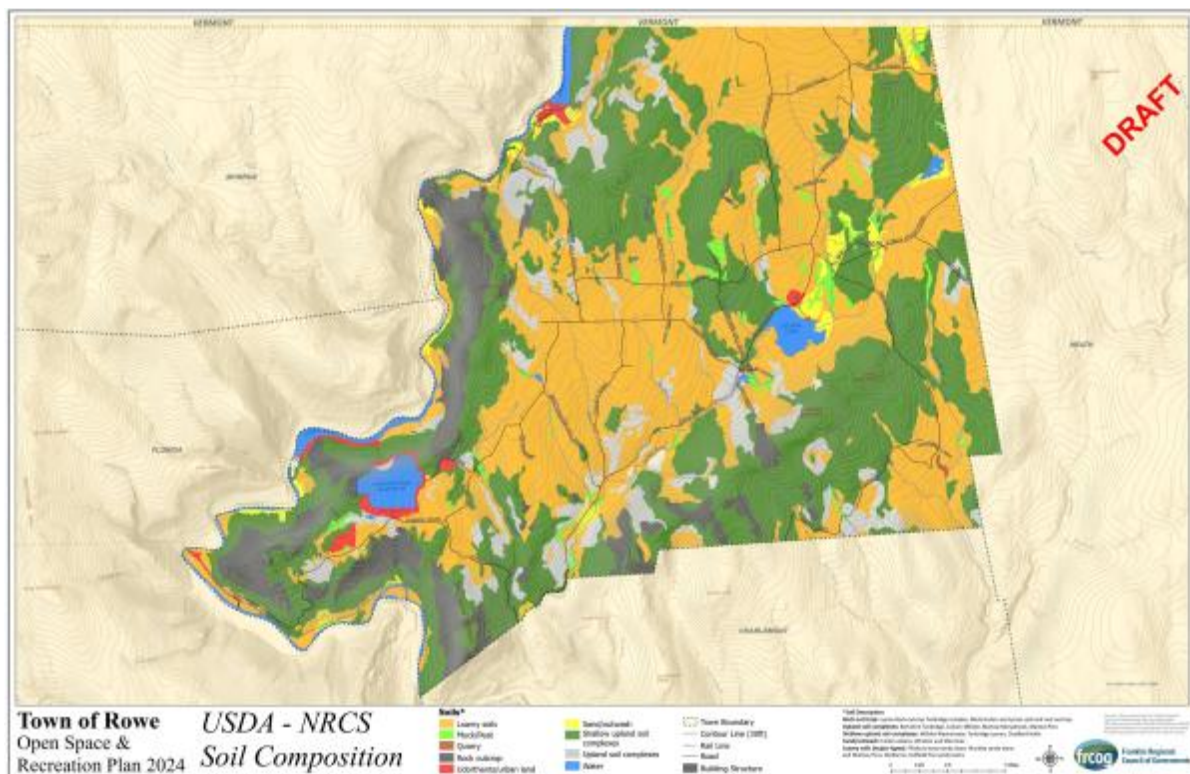
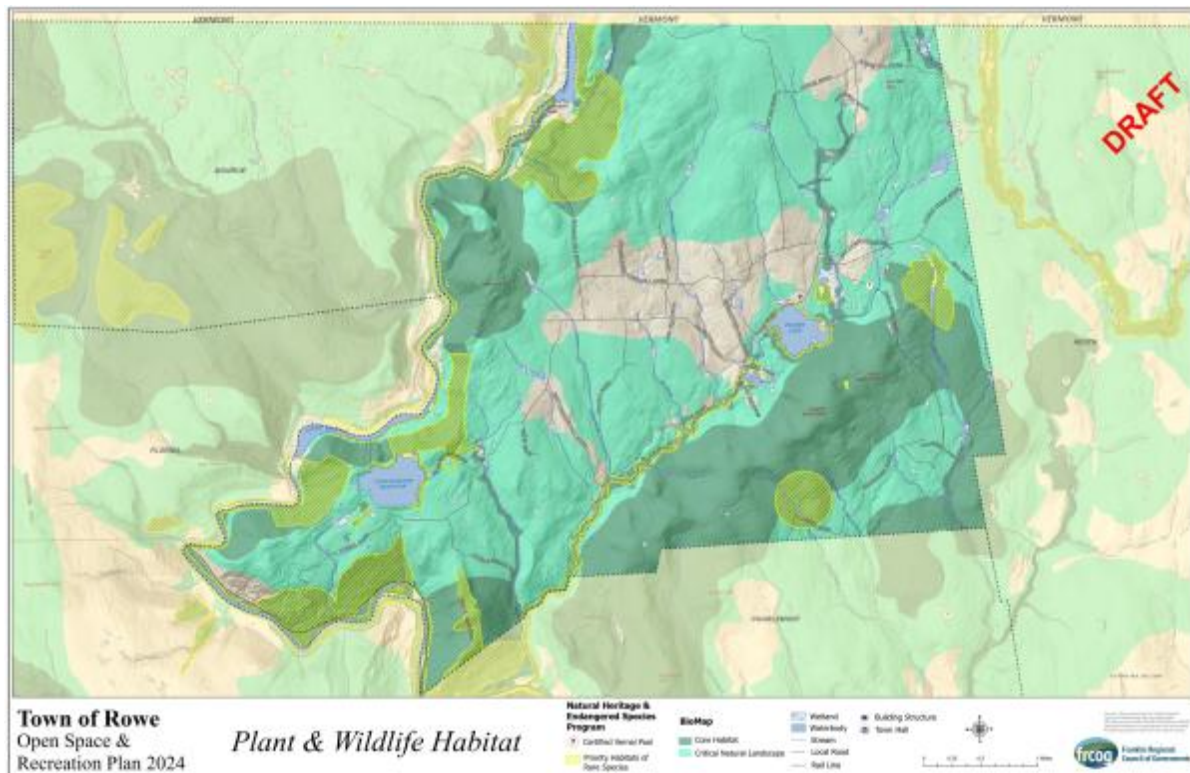
The scenic landscapes, archeologic, historical, and cultural features, unusual geological features, and unique environments that help make Rowe a unique place include:

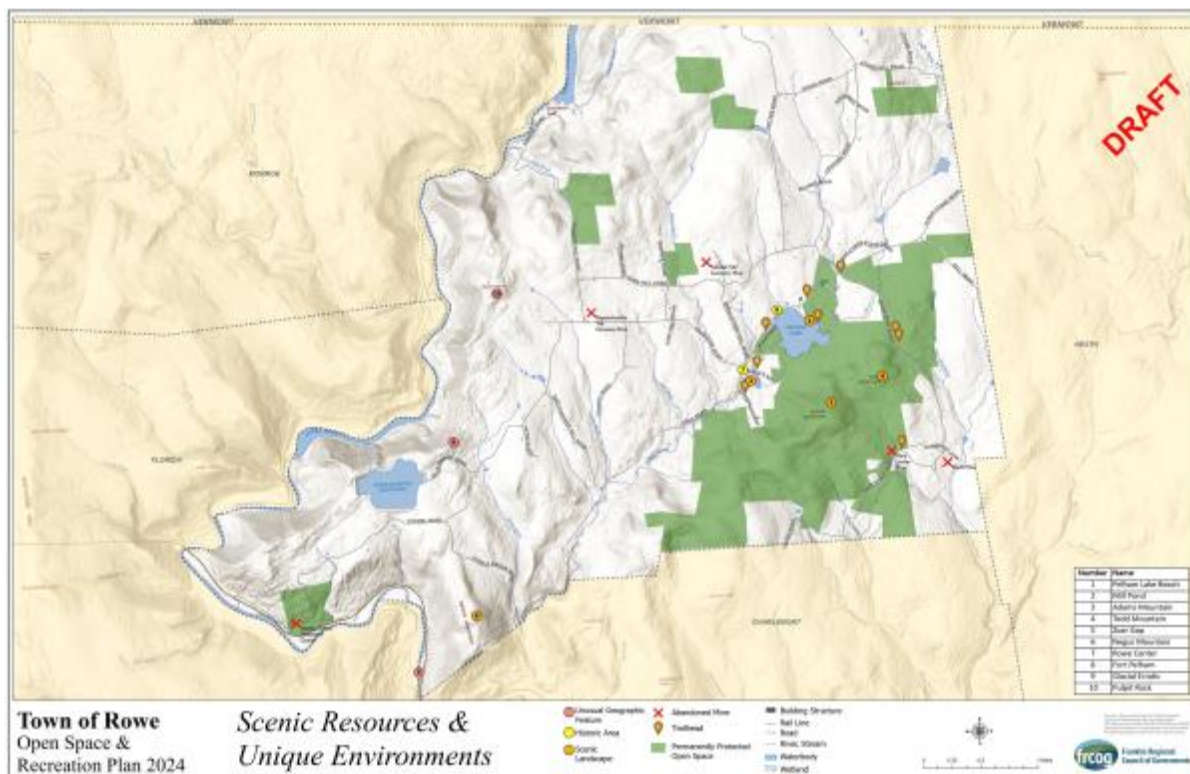
- Pelham Lake and Pelham Lake Park
- Mountains and prominences such as Negus Mountain and Pulpit Rock
- Historic landmarks such as Fort Pelham
- Stonewalls and other remnants of Rowe's agricultural past
- Abandoned mines
- Unique plant communities
- Abundant recreation facilities, recreation areas, and trail systems

The environmental challenges Rowe faces includes:

- Considerations of environmental equity and environmental justice
- Flooding, erosion, and sedimentation
- Ground and surface water pollution
- Hazardous waste
- Impacts of land conversion and development
- Unlined landfills
- Invasive species
- Pollinator habitat and insect decline



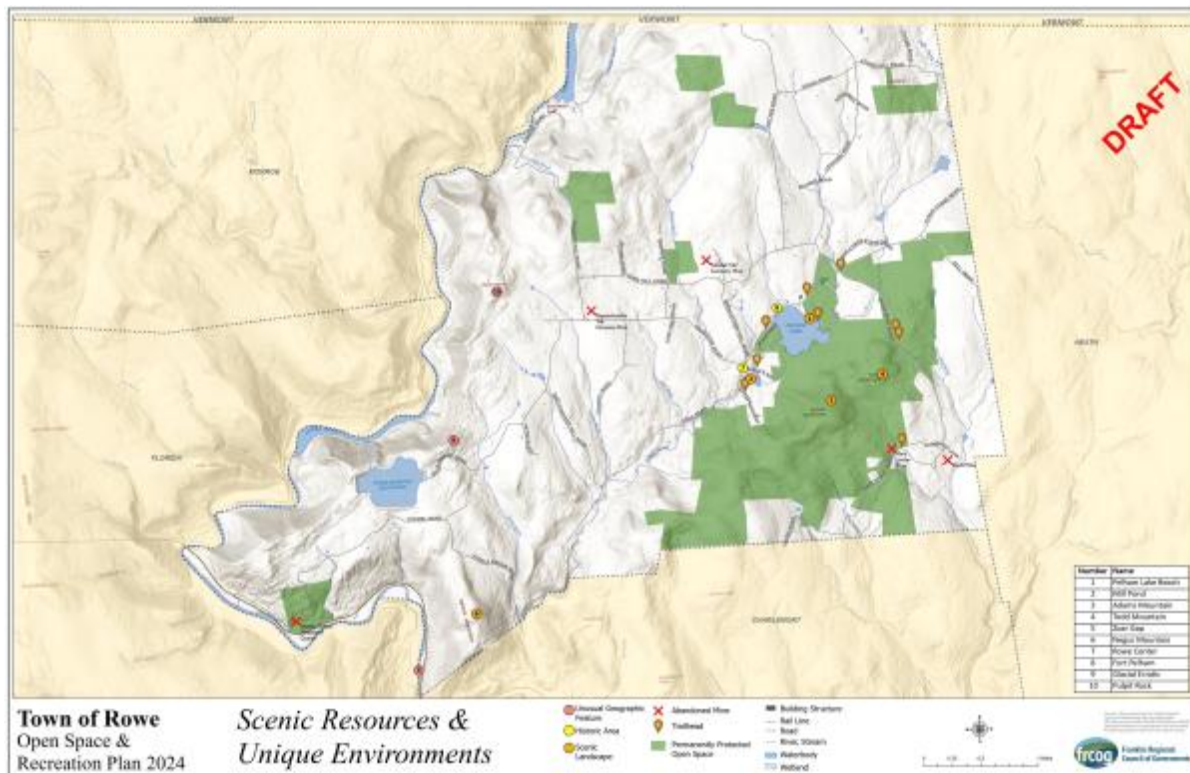






Level of Protection	Acres (rounded)	Percent of Land in Rowe (of total 15,705 acres)
<b>Permanently Protected Land</b>		
<b>Publicly Owned</b>		
Commonwealth of Massachusetts	426	2.7%
Pelham Lake Park (Town of Rowe)	1331	8.5%
Public Cemeteries	5	0.0%
<b>Total Publicly Owned</b>	<b>1762</b>	<b>11.2%</b>
<b>Privately Owned</b>		
Conservation Restrictions (CR)	627	4.0%
Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR)	46	0.3%
Bear Swamp (CR)	40	0.3%
Great River Hydro (CR)	290	1.7%
<b>Total Privately Owned</b>	<b>1,002</b>	<b>6.4%</b>
<b>Non-Profit Owned</b>		
Franklin Land Trust (FLT)	94	0.6%
New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF)	172	1.1%
<b>Total Non-Profit Owned</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>1.7%</b>
<b>TOTAL PERMANENTLY-PROTECTED LAND</b>	<b>3,030</b>	<b>19.3%</b>
<b>Land Under Limited Protection</b>		
<b>Publicly Owned</b>		
Town of Rowe	208	1.3%
<b>Total Publicly Owned</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
<b>TOTAL LAND WITH LIMITED PROTECTION</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
<b>Temporarily-Protected Land</b>		
<b>Privately Owned</b>		
Chapter 61	440	2.8%
Chapter 61A	48	0.3%
Chapter 61B	5	0.0%
<b>Total Privately Owned</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>3.4%</b>
<b>TOTAL TEMPORARILY PROTECTED LAND</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>3.4%</b>
<b>TOTAL OPEN SPACE WITH SOME LEVEL OF PROTECTION</b>	<b>3,731</b>	<b>24.0%</b>





## Section 6: *DRAFT* COMMUNITY GOALS AND VISION

Based on the results of the 2022 Open Space and Recreation Survey, the plan summarizes the communities vision with the following statements:

- *Protect the town's ecosystem services, biodiversity, climate resilience, and ecologically vulnerable areas.*
- *Make Rowe's open space and recreation opportunities available to ages and abilities.*
- *Improve public awareness of open space and recreation opportunities.*
- *Maintain Rowe's rural character and sense of place.*
- *Work with the community and regional partners to improve awareness, literacy and planning of open space, recreation, the environment, and climate resilience.*

## Section 7: *DRAFT* ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

When asked which efforts would be highest priority for permanently protecting undeveloped land in support of climate resiliency, survey

takers overwhelmingly prioritized protecting water resources. Keeping Rowe's network of contiguous forest intact is an indispensable climate resilience strategy. For Pelham Lake Park, efforts to keep the forest healthy and diversified for climate resilience can be guided by the community-driven *2022 – 2023 Pelham Lake Park Forest Stewardship Climate Plan*. Overall, continuing to prioritize for protection of important wildlife habitat areas and links between them, as well as preserving riparian buffers along streams, is the most effective action to protect wildlife and facilitate their adaptation to climate change.

Survey results indicate that the community generally supports the Town continuing to acquire land for conservation, with 88% of respondents supporting the acceptance of land donated to the Town for conservation. Alongside land protection, Smart Growth-oriented land use policies that promote infill and efficient use of green space for new development can help curb fragmentation of open space from development. Sixty-five percent of survey respondents support zoning changes to protect open space.

Pelham Lake Park—which is used by 98% of survey takers and represents the majority of recreation opportunities in Rowe—provides Rowe residents with free trails, water-based recreation, and a robust array of park amenities, meeting several of the Commonwealth's top recreation goals and many needs of the community. Two of the top four recreational activities that survey respondent households want to do more of in Rowe are use trails for walking, hiking, and trail running (87%), snowshoeing (58%), and cross-country skiing (57%). Many of these suggestions are projects already underway at Pelham Lake Park and those that are not are addressed in the seven-year action plan (forthcoming Section 9). Picnicking, bird watching, foraging, and fishing are what Rowe survey takers most wanted to do more of after swimming and trail-based activities. Responses from the 2022 Open Space and Recreation Survey indicated a need to make these and other recreation opportunities in Rowe more accessible to a range of abilities.

Survey respondents expressed an interest in nature education, history,

and group exercise. Providing programs at a variety of times and with accessibility accommodations may be important for engaging more people in outdoor programming. The Town's ADA self-assessment found that most of the Town's recreation or picnicking sites could improve by adding wheelchair-accessible picnic tables and smooth, stable trails and facility pathways. For existing recreation resources to meet the needs of Rowe residents, there is a need for clear and broad availability of information on recreation opportunities, environmental conservation, and climate resiliency practices.

Being a long drive from basic amenities and with population numbers slowly on the rebound since the mid-1900s after a century of decline, Rowe has not been under the kind of development pressure that typically drives towns to revise its land use regulations in order to preserve its existing landscape character. Yet, if development pressure were to change over the next decade or several decades, due to climate migration or other unknown factors, Rowe may want to review its zoning to ensure that it is directing new development in ways that preserves town character and protects the environment while also building climate resilience.

Rowe boards and committees have a strong culture of communication and cooperation. It is imperative that this level of coordination be maintained on the many intersecting topics important to the environment, open space, recreation, and their climate resilience.

## **Section 8: *DRAFT* GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **PROTECT ROWE'S ECOSYSTEM INTEGRITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES**

*Protect and restore ecosystem function to ensure climate resilient ecosystem services and wildlife habitat, and to protect the intrinsic value of a biodiverse natural world.*

- Prioritize the protection of lands that contain and support the function of valuable and sensitive ecological systems.



- Manage ecosystems for their many benefits, including biodiversity, habitat, stormwater management, climate resilience, and carbon sequestration.
- Protect high quality waters by protecting or preserving wetlands, cold water fisheries, floodplains, the river corridor, and riparian buffers.
- Sustainably manage stormwater to reduce harm from polluted and erosive runoff to groundwater, surface waters, and public and private infrastructure.
- Protect the availability and quality of drinking water resources.
- Use land use regulations to increase protection of valued natural and cultural resources, and to support climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- Steward Pelham Lake Park into the climate future, taking advantage of it as a learning lab for the wider community and region.

## **ENHANCE RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ROWE**

*Ensure that Rowe improves the quality, quantity, and accessibility of its recreational resources for current and future generations, especially those that connect people with the town's diverse natural environments and landscapes.*

- Steward Pelham Lake Park to meet the diverse needs of the Rowe community and keep it functioning as a community hub.
- Expand network of hiking/biking/skiing/snowshoeing options across town.
- Protect cultural and historic resources.
- Continue to provide free or low-cost outdoor and educational programming that fosters the community's enjoyment of and connection to the outdoors.
- Protect and improve the accessibility of recreational and cultural opportunities in Rowe.

## **CREATE THE ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACHIEVING**

## THE GOALS OF THE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

*Improve public awareness among Town departments and residents of environmental, open space, and recreational topics through effective communication. Continue to engage residents in discussions about community projects and the town's natural, recreational, and cultural resources, and as volunteers and stewards of these resources.*

- Work with Pelham Lake Park staff, Conservation Commission, and other Town boards and committees to carry out the OSRP's Seven-Year Action Plan.
- Work with community and regional partners on the planning of open space, recreation, ecosystem protection, and climate resilience.
- Expand on the Town's communication with and education of residents and students regarding environmental issues, environmental protection, climate change, open space, recreation, and multi-use trails.
- Continue to pursue funding opportunities for open space, recreation, climate resilience, and education.



Check back in the fall to see:

- **Draft 7-Year Action Plan**

*Image: Charlemont, as seen from southeast Rowe.*

## OSRP Timeline

The Rowe Open Space and Recreation Committee is working with land use and natural resources planning staff the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) to develop a full draft of the OSRP over the next year and a half:



## **Fall 2022**

Public survey circulates

## **Winter & Spring 2022-2023**

Open Space and Recreation Committee meets about chapter development and the 7-Year Acton Plan

## **Summer 2023**

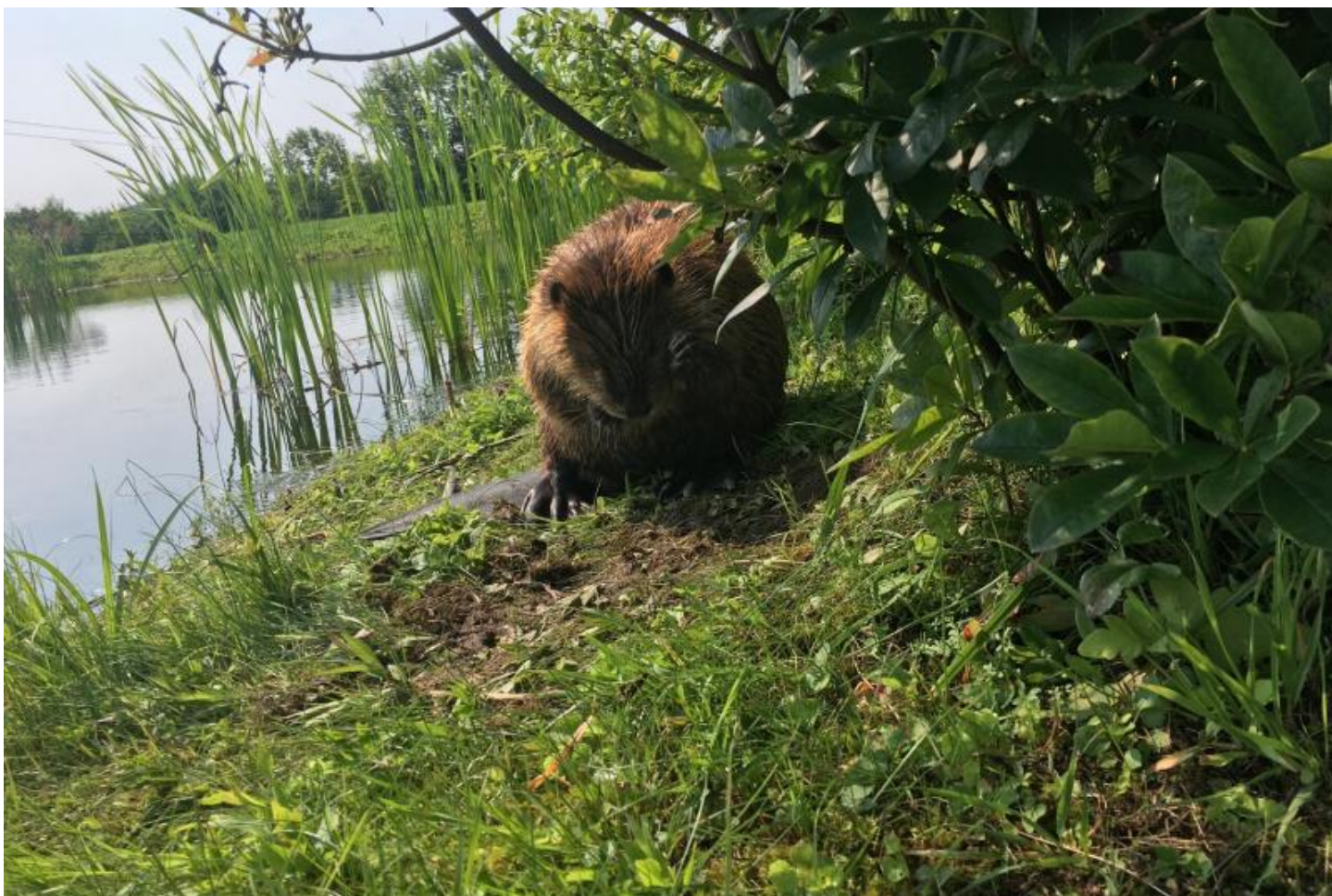
Full draft is completed

## **Fall 2023**

Plan is posted for public review and a public forum is held

## **Winter 2023-2024**

Plan is completed and sent to the Department of Conservation Services for review



## How to Get Involved

### **Attend Open Space and Recreation Committee meetings.**

Meetings are always open to the general public. Times and agendas are posted on the Town website.

### **Review the DRAFT open space plan during the public review period and attend the OSRP public forum.**

The public forum will kick off the 2-week public review period, which will likely take place in the fall of 2023.

*Image: Beaver at private pond in Rowe.*

